



U.S. Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

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Gregg and Kennedy Unveil Bipartisan IDEA Reauthorization Bill

Bill Improves Special Education Student's Ability to Learn to their Full Potential while Improving the Program for Parents, Teachers, and School Districts

Washington, DC—After months of bipartisan work, Senator Judd Gregg (R-New Hampshire), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and ranking member Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), today unveiled joint legislation reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The bill gives school districts the flexibility to use IDEA funds to address the most important needs of students in each school, reduces the burden of paperwork for special education teachers, improves conflict resolution, reduces the need for litigation and encourages mediation. The bill also improves discipline by simplifying the procedures used by school districts, and improves parental involvement in the education process.

"The bill we are introducing today makes improvements to a program designed to guarantee that all children are able to learn and grow to the fullest of their potential. Our bill gives local schools the flexibility to use IDEA funding in ways that make sense for each local school district. We reduce the paperwork burden on teachers so they can focus their time and energy on what they do best, teaching our kids. We provide a bipartisan solution to the often contentious discipline issue by providing protections for children with disabilities while simplifying the rules that school districts use in discipline cases," said Senator Gregg.

"Since it was enacted, IDEA has opened the school house doors and helped millions of children with disabilities lead independent and productive lives. For these children, IDEA has meant the difference between dependence and independence, between lost potential and productive careers," said Senator Edward Kennedy.

"In the past, IDEA reauthorization has been a divisive and partisan process," Senator Gregg said. "Senator Kennedy and I were determined to come together to make this a bipartisan process and craft a bill that can be supported by both Republicans and Democrats. I am proud to say we have achieved that goal and the bill we are introducing today is a testament to what can be accomplished when politics are put aside."

"This bill represents our best efforts to ensure that a quality education for every disabled child remains within reach," Senator Kennedy said.

The Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will mark up the IDEA Reauthorization bill on Wednesday, June 25. A summary of the bill is attached.

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